

I claim:

1. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process for use in a tobacco barn, with the tobacco barn having a plurality of internal cross members for supporting tobacco leaves during curing, said apparatus comprising:

a plenum for attachment to a tobacco barn;

a device for generating air movement in fluid communication with said plenum for delivering atmospheric air thereto; and

a plurality of conduits in fluid communication with said plenum for receiving airflow therefrom, said conduits being formed with a plurality of openings therein to allow air to flow outwardly therefrom, said conduits being configured for disposition within the barn for fluid communication with tobacco in a curing disposition within the barn.

2. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 1 wherein said plenum is formed from a pliant material.

3. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 1 wherein said plenum is inflatable by said device for generating air movement.

4. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 1 wherein said conduits are formed as tubes that are formed from a pliant material.

5. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 1 wherein said conduits are inflatable by said a device for generating air movement.

6. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 1 wherein said device for generating air movement is a fan.

7. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 1 wherein said conduits are movable between a stowed disposition and a use disposition.

8. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 1 and further comprising a plurality of attachment members for mounting said conduits within the barn.

9. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 8 wherein said attachment members are formed as hooks for engagement with support members in a tobacco barn and for simultaneous engagement with said conduits.

10. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 1 wherein a portion of said plenum is configured as a reservoir for holding tobacco treatment material.

11. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 10 wherein said tobacco treatment material is a liquid is chosen from the group consisting of aromatics, flavorants, humectants and water.

5 12. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 10 wherein said tobacco treatment material is heated air.

13. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 1 wherein said plenum is formed from a transparent material.

10

14. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 1 wherein said plenum is formed from a generally translucent material.

15 15. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 1 wherein said plenum is formed from an opaque material.

16. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process for use in a tobacco barn, with the tobacco barn having a plurality of internal cross members for supporting tobacco leaves during curing, said apparatus comprising:

20

an inflatable plenum for attachment to a tobacco barn;

a fan in fluid communication with said plenum for delivering atmospheric air thereinto; and

a plurality of conduits in fluid communication with said plenum for receiving airflow therefrom, said conduits being formed from pliant material for at least partial inflation by said fan, and being formed with a plurality of openings therein to allow air to flow outwardly therefrom, said conduits being configured for disposition
5 within the barn for movement between a stowed disposition and a use disposition for fluid communication with tobacco in a curing disposition within the barn.

17. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim
16 and further comprising a plurality of attachment members for mounting said conduits
10 within the barn.

18. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim
17 wherein said attachment members are formed as hooks for engagement with support
members in a tobacco barn and for simultaneous engagement with said conduits.

15

19. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim
16 wherein a portion of said plenum is configured as a reservoir for holding tobacco
treatment material.

20. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim
19 wherein said tobacco treatment material is chosen from the group consisting of
aromatics, flavorants, humectants, and water.

21. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim
16 wherein said tobacco treatment material is heated air.

22. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim
5 16 wherein said plenum is formed from a transparent material.

23. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim
16 wherein said plenum is formed from a generally translucent material.

10 24. An apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim
16 wherein said plenum is formed from an opaque material.

25. A method for facilitating a tobacco curing process for use in a tobacco
barn, with the tobacco barn having a plurality of internal cross members for supporting
15 tobacco leaves during curing, said method comprising the steps of:

providing an apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process including a
plenum for attachment to a tobacco barn; a device for generating air movement in fluid
communication with said plenum for delivering atmospheric air thereto; and a plurality of
conduits in fluid communication with said plenum for receiving airflow therefrom, said
20 conduits being formed with a plurality of openings therein to allow air to flow outwardly
therefrom;

placing tobacco for curing in the barn with at least a portion thereof
overlying said at least one of said conduits;

applying atmospheric air to said plenum using said device for generating air movement, thereby directing moving air into said at least one conduit wherein atmospheric air is directed outwardly through said openings and into contact with said tobacco.

5

26. A method for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 25 wherein said step of providing an apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process includes providing a plenum wherein a portion of said plenum is configured as a reservoir for holding tobacco treatment material.

10

27. A method for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 26 and further comprising the step of introducing tobacco treatment material into said reservoir.

15

28. A method for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 27 wherein said step of introducing a tobacco treatment material into said reservoir includes introducing a tobacco treatment liquid chosen from the group consisting of aromatics, flavorants and humectants.

20

29. A method for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 27 wherein said step of introducing a tobacco treatment material into said reservoir includes introducing water.

30. A method for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 25 wherein said step of providing an apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process includes providing an apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process wherein said conduits are movable between a stowed disposition and a use disposition, and said
5 method further comprises the step of moving at least one of said conduits from a stowed disposition to a use disposition.

31. A method for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 25 wherein said step of providing an apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process
10 includes providing a plenum formed from generally transparent material.

32. A method for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 25 wherein said step of providing an apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process includes providing a plenum formed from a generally translucent material.
15

33. A method for facilitating a tobacco curing process according to claim 25 wherein said step of providing an apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process includes providing a plenum formed from generally opaque material.

20 34. A method for facilitating a tobacco curing process for use in a tobacco barn, with the tobacco barn having a plurality of internal cross members for supporting tobacco leaves during curing, said method comprising the steps of:

providing an apparatus for facilitating a tobacco curing process including a plenum for attachment to a tobacco barn, a portion of said plenum being configured as a reservoir for holding tobacco treatment liquid; a fan in fluid communication with said plenum for delivering atmospheric air thereto; and a plurality of conduits in fluid communication with said plenum for receiving airflow therefrom, said conduits being formed with a plurality of openings therein to allow air to flow outwardly therefrom, said conduits being movable between a stowed disposition and a use disposition;

introducing a tobacco treatment liquid into said reservoir, said tobacco treatment liquid chosen from the group consisting of aromatics, flavorants, humectants and water;

moving at least one of said conduits from a stowed disposition to a use disposition;

placing tobacco for curing in the barn with at least a portion thereof overlying said at least one of said conduits;

applying atmospheric air to said plenum using said device for generating air movement, thereby directing moving air into said at least one conduit wherein atmospheric air is directed outwardly through said openings and into contact with said tobacco.